

WEST TISBURY  
CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
September 28, 2021

**Present:** Geraldine Brooks, Whit Griswold, Angela Luckey, and Donna Paulnock

**Absent:** John Brannon, Peter Rodegast, and Michael Turnell

**Staff Present:** Maria McFarland

**Also present for all or part of the meeting:** David Bouck, Sheri Caseau, Keith Gazeille, Chris McIsaac, Emily Reddington, Rachel Sorrentino, and Bill Wilcox

Whit Griswold called the meeting to order at 5:05 P.M. The meeting was held via Zoom in accordance with the Governor's order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c.30A sec.20.

**Minutes:**

The minutes of the September 14, 2021 meeting were approved as revised. Roll Call Vote: Angela, Donna, Geraldine, and Whit voted in favor.

**New Business:**

**Tisbury Great Pond (TGP)/ Informal meeting with Great Pond Foundation (GPF):** Emily Reddington, Julie Pringle and David Bouck presented the results of 20 days of sampling at the locations listed below, collecting over 11, 000 data points. Members viewed a slide presentation, a copy of which is available in the office.

- Sampling sites: TGP 1, 4,5, 6 & 7-water quality and nutrients ( these are the sentinel sites in the MA Estuaries project)
- Sampling sites TPG2, 3, 3A and 8-water quality only

Emily Reddington, Executive Director of the GPF, made a few brief introductory remarks. Julie Pringle, the Scientific Program Manager, presented data on algae concentrations, cyanobacteria, surface salinity and Bottom Dissolved Oxygen. Julie explained that they measured Dissolved Oxygen at the top, middle and bottom. David Bouck, the Watershed Outreach Manager, talked about a grant proposal he has written to create a digitized baseline of historical data related to ecosystem monitoring and management within TGP. Using data from Edgartown Great Pond, he presented slides showing data they hope to compile for TGP.

**Commissioner's Comments/ Questions:**

When asked how much nitrogen sampling was done, and when that data would be available. Emily said they have finished sampling for the year and are still compiling the data. They hope to have a report no later than the end of February. Whit asked if the testing could be done on island. Emily explained that it would be too expensive to purchase the equipment needed.

Geraldine asked Chris McIssac and Emily how the fund raising was going. Chris told the board they have sign off from the IRS for their non-profit 501(3)c status. They are waiting for the state approval. Technically they aren't able to fund raise until they have a final sign off from the state. Chris has been speaking to prospective donors to get seed money for capital costs and operating budget. He is interested to know how much of the testing program will come under the purview of the Tisbury Great Foundation rather than Emily's group. Chris plans to start fund raising this winter.

Geraldine asked how the board can help. Emily replied that this board is the most actively involved that she has worked with and are well informed. Emily said land use regulations need to be developed regarding affordable housing and climate change. Whit asked if the GPF has interacted with the Zoning Board. Maria suggested speaking to the Board of Health regarding regulations requiring enhanced septic systems and for housing and zoning, the Planning Board.

Public Comment: Bill Wilcox provided some insights into interpreting the data being presented. Bill noted that the overall quality of a water body is determined to a large extent by the worst period of water quality. The low dissolved oxygen readings are a factor. One of the goals should be to limit the low dissolved oxygen readings. Bill also asked if they use a flowometer for the phytoplankton species and is it calibrated in the office or is there a calibration that happens in a lab. Julie answered that the probe is made in Germany. The instrument is sent back to the company every couple of years to be calibrated. The equipment is used by the EPA and university labs use for monitoring. Emily said Massachusetts doesn't use these yet. Emily hopes to team up with New York State. Bill added that back in 1990's, the MVC sent a lot of samples over to UMASS Dartmouth identified to the genus level and that data is at the MVC. Emily said it would be great to see that data and compare it.

No action was taken.

**Climate Action Plan Committee:** A request from Kate Warner for the board to appoint a member to this committee was tabled to the next meeting.

**State Forest:** A motion was made and seconded to sign the form letter that is circulating in support of House Bill 909 entitled, "An Act to provide for housing with the Manuel F. Correllus State Forest", submitted to the Commission by Tara Whiting-Wells. Roll Call Vote: Angela, Donna, ,Geraldine, and Whit voted in favor.

### **Old Business:**

#### **Map 7 Lot 28 /Cottles/Blackwater Brook Farm:**

Bill Wilcox told the board that the two rounds of sampling show a clear pattern of both E. coli and Enterococci bacteria downstream from Runamuck Farm. One of the rounds showed an increase immediately down from Stone Bridge and Black Water Hollow. The second round of sampling showed an increase at Longview.

Bill concluded that Runamuck Farm may be a likely source. He noted that these microorganisms can survive outside the gut of a bird or an animal and maintain the population in a suitable setting. Bill would like to see more data and samples taken after a rain event to see if the pattern continues, but felt that there is enough information to have a conversation with the owner of Runamuck. Bill recounted that Don Liptak formerly of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), visited this farm several years ago, and provided recommendations that included fencing to keep the livestock out of the stream.

Maria explained that the farmer has to invite the NRCS staff to help them. The NRCS is not a regulatory agency so they have no role in enforcement.

Members agreed that before the board does more formal sampling or sampling after a rain event, a discussion should be had with the farmers along this brook. Bill and Maria will work on a letter.

A motion was made and seconded to send a letter to Brian Athearn of Runamuck Farm, Alan Cottle of Blackwater Brook Farm, and Shelia-Kathryn Leonard -Peck regarding these sampling results and the need

to use best management practices for livestock. Roll Call Vote: Angela, Donna ,Geraldine, and Whit voted in favor.

**Tisbury Great Pond/Parrot Feather infestation removal:** Keith Gazeille of SOLitude Lake Management came before the board to review the Parrot Feather removal that took place on September 21 in Muddy Cove, the issues the work crew had that prohibited them from accessing the area of infestation in Town Cove and to discuss next steps to complete the work in Town Cove. Maria shared photos and gave a summary of the work done in Muddy Cove.

Keith apologized for forgetting to send the fragmentation barrier the last time. Maria explained that the crew was able to purchase some silt fencing and got it in place before too much work was done in Muddy Cove. Before removing the silt fencing they removed any fragments they could find that collected at the barrier

The new plan for completing this project is to access the area in Town Cove from the landing at the Runner Road Association dock at the end of Runner Road. Maria has secured permission from Faith Runner, the property owner.

Keith explained that the logistics of having several small boats shuttle bags of the material would not work because of the weight of the bags and would be too labor intensive. A johnboat will not be suitable for work in this location. Keith proposed using an amphibious low ground track vehicle called a Marsh Tracker which weighs about 3,500lbs with ground pressure less than 2 psi. Keith said the limited use of the equipment will have temporary minor impacts. The ground pressure for a human footprint is 1.5 psi. The work will be done by hand, material stockpiled in a johnboat, bagged and transported back to the landing using the Marsh Tracker. The water depth in the area at last report was about 6 inches. A johnboat will draw 8 inches to a foot with weight in it. They need to be able to get the root structure out so the lower the water level the more effective the hand pulling.

.Maria spoke with Ray Gale, the Shellfish Constable and relayed his comments to the board. She said there are no shell fish beds in this cove that Ray would be concerned about ,and that it was more important to get the Parrot Feather out of the cove. Chris McIsaac and Rachel Sorrentino agreed.

Members expressed their concerns about the use of a piece of equipment like, this but determined that any potential impacts to the substrate or emergent vegetation in the pond would be mitigated by accomplishing the goal of removing the invasive Parrot Feather. Keith said any vegetation that is impacted would rebound within a growing season.

Typically, the marsh master is used in wetlands . Keith said in his experience, a notice of intent is required because of the type of work being done rather than the kind of equipment that is used.

Angela asked if the machine is cleaned before it put into the pond so that invasives aren't introduced. Keith answered that the machine is power washed after every use.

A member of Keith's crew was only able to do some assessment of the Town Cove area but could not get all the way to the plants. There is no available access from the shoreline. Chris said it is a steep wooded hillside down to a marsh. Creating a trail would need permission from the property owner and a new permit. Chris said they should plan for 2 feet of muck.

The second issue the board needs to address is paying for the unexpected cost of the equipment, additional labor, and a second trip to the Vineyard.

The original appropriation approved at the May 18, 2021 annual town meeting was for \$3,350. Of that, the project has cost \$1,400 to date. Keith quoted an extra \$1,750 for the additional work plus the cost of disposing the bags at the Dukes County transfer station. There is no way to calculate the number of bags the material will generate. They took 22 bags of material out of Muddy Cove at a cost of \$130.

A motion was made by Geraldine, seconded by Angela to approve the proposed plan outlined above, to enter into a revised contract with SOLitude Lake Management, and to submit a reserve fund transfer request in the amount of \$2,000 to the Finance Committee to cover the unexpected additional costs associated with completing this project. Roll Call Vote: Angela, Donna, Geraldine, and Whit voted in favor.

**Administrative:**

There being no further business to conduct, the meeting adjourned at 7:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Maria McFarland  
Board Administrator  
APPROVED  
OCTOBER 26, 2021